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Is Bible and Quran the true word of God?

“The Economist case against addictive substances”

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Abstract

The use of addictive substances is one of the most critical issues facing humanity since time immemorial. The ground reality exhibits that there are direct relationship of drug use with violence, corruption, incest and numerous other immoral and corrupt activities. The present study therefore made an attempt to exhibit and highlights the policy prescription provided by economists and different religions. Towards addictive substances the policy prescription of economists are usually based on confusion and contradiction. One group of economists encourages the prohibition of addictive substances, while another influential group propagates the philosophy of *laissez faire* and market economy. This influential group of economist advocates that all addictive substances should be legalized on the basis of their strength and effectiveness. Like Judaism the Christian church also encourage the use of addictive substances through the ceremony of Eucharist, Sacred Meal, and Holy Communion. In sharp contrast Islam consider addictive substances as the mother of all evils and ills. In the philosophy of Islam, on one side the production and consumption of addictive substances are strictly prohibited, while on the other side through moral education the use of addictive substances are discouraged.

1. Introduction:

Addictive substance is one of critical problem facing humanity since time immemorial. An addictive substance can be defined as the one for which the desire to use depends considerably on previous consumptions. A widely used addictive substance includes heroin, cocaine, alcohol, and crack. To discourage the use of addictive substance as well as reduce their flows into their countries, many governments allocate and spent billions of dollars every year. Addictive substance has several adverse impacts. Addictive substances not only harm the users but also inflict costs and harms to others. In majority of the cases alcohol is the most widely used addictive substance affecting the users as well as the society. Increasing reports of road deaths as well as casualties linked to drunk driving have been registered and recorded throughout the globe. According to the World Health Organization report, every year due to drunk driving approximately 1.3 million peoples are killed on roads. Drunk driving is also responsible for the injury of around 50 million people across the globe. Similarly drunk driving is one of the biggest sources of disability in people across the globe. In the least developed countries ninety per cent of the casualties occur due to drunk driving. The situation is expected to exacerbate further specifically in the least developing countries as majority of them record significant increases in car use. In terms of robbery and killing drug addicts put a significant damage and destruction to almost each and every society across the globe. The sale, consumption and dissemination of addictive substance are always a source of untold damage. Across the globe both lawful and unlawful production entails billions of dollars and the use and control of drugs have a deep and intense medical, social, moral, political and legal repercussions.

Different countries and cultures have different customs as well as rules and regulations regarding addictive substance. The present study not only attempted to

highlight and discuss the solution and policy recommendations provided by Economists but it also demonstrated and discussed the philosophy behind the use of addictive substance in Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

The writing and publication of this article is not intended to insult someone belief but rather it is motivated by the desire to invite our non Muslims believers especially the Christians to come with us and do find the truth in the following article. In Quran this reality is mentioned in the following words:

Say (O Muhammad PBUH), "O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah ." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him]."(Quran 3:64)

"Verily, you will find the strongest among men in enmity to the Muslims the Jews and those who are Idolaters/ Polytheist (Al-Mushrik) and you will find the nearest in love to the Muslims those who say we are "We are Christian". That is because amongst them are priest and monks and they are not proud". (Quran 5:82)

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses the economic case against drug use. Section 3 shows the culture of addictive substance in Christianity. Section 4 discusses the philosophy behind the prohibition of addictive substance in Islam. Section 5 concludes and recommends policy solutions.

2. Drug use in Christianity:

According to an estimate every 6th person around the globe is Christian. Drinking wine is a form of worship in Christianity, which is regularly held at the rite of Passover. Apart from Passover, this rite has other names, namely Eucharist, Sacred Meal, and Holy Communion. The rite of Passover ranks amongst the most important rituals of Christianity and it is celebrated in commemoration of the sacrifice of Jesus. One day before the alleged arrest of Jesus, follows:

“Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins”.
(Mat. 26:26)

Luke adds Jesus thereafter said;

“Do this in remembrance of me”.

The rite of Passover is held in fulfillment of this order. The well known Christian Scholar Justin Martyr¹ explains the procedure of Passover, namely that there is a gathering every Sunday at Church. At the beginning some prayers and hymn are sung. Then the participants embrace each other and convey their good wishes. Bread and wine is then brought. The head of the gathering takes the bread and wine and makes prayers of the blessing to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All

¹ Quoted by Burkitt, pp. 165-167

participants answer Amen. The Deacons of the Church then distribute the bread and wine among the participants.

In Christianity alcohol is one of the greatest blessing God ever bestowed on mankind, which can be proved from the following verses of bible,

“And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart” (Psalm 104:15).

In Bible there are many verses which claim that even prophets used addicted substances in their lives. Evidence of Lot’s drinking wine can be confirmed from the following verse of Bible;

“And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yester night with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: the same *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.” (Gen

19:30).

Similarly another verse of Bible also verified the drunkenness of Noah,

“And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham *is* the father of Canaan. These *are* the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread. And Noah began *to be* an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without” (GEN 9:18).

There is no reference in Mark and Matthew to an order by Jesus directing that this act be made a perpetual rite. Paul was a first to render it a ritual (I Cor 11:24), and Luke followed suit because he was a student of Paul. Christian theologians have conceded this. Hence FC Burkitt says:

“The account of Last Supper in Mark does not indicate that this act must be celebrated in future; but St. Paul when referring to the act attributes it to Jesus and adds the following sentence, ‘Do this in remembrance of me.’”

In the above verses Jesus Christ encouraged the use of addictive substances but ground realities exhibits that there is severe adverse impact of addictive substances not only on users but on the entire society.

On the other hand in Bible, there are thirty verses which says that God is Omniscient which can be confirmed from the following verses,

“Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure”(Psalm147:5).

Another verse in the Bible goes in this way,

“For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything” (John 3:20).

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable”(Isaiah 40:30).

In conclusion it is a universal truth that the use of addictive substances is held responsible for numerous personal and social ills. Contemporary Bible on one hand not only allowed addictive substances but also made its use as a compulsion which is regularly held among the Christian community in religious festival.

On the other hand there are many verses in Bible which says that God is omniscient. Therefore reading the above contradiction one start suspecting whether contemporary Bible is the true Word of God?

3. The Contemporary Economic Case against Drug Use:

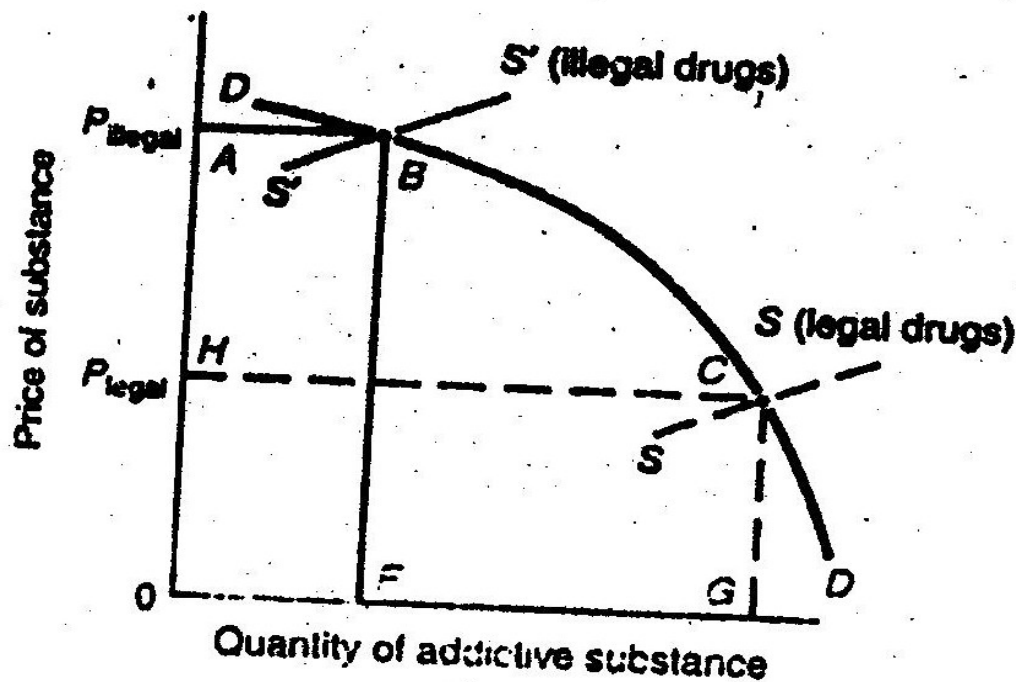


FIGURE 5-5. Demand for Addictive Substances by Casual Users

Regarding the policy prescriptions of conventional economics, critics quote a famous joke which goes, "That the First Law of Economics says that for every economist, there exist an equal and opposite economist, while the Second Law of Economics says that both economists are wrong". As a corollary and proof they cite the issue of addictive substance in economics. In other words economist's advice on the issue of addictive substance is based on two hands. On one hand as a policy prescription, one group of economists supports the prevention of addictive

substances. With their usual blackboard model, this group opined that addictive substance is highly price sensitive and therefore prohibition will bring an upward shift of the supply curve by decreasing the equilibrium quantity (Q_e) and increasing the equilibrium prices (P_e). Prohibition of addictive substances will bring a drastic decrease in the use of addictive substances accompanied by a decrease in the negative externalities of drug adductors. Many economists of this school of thoughts argued that legalization of drugs would decrease prices of addictive substances which will bring a drastic increase in the number of occasional users. This group of economists opined that prohibition of addictive substances will be the best policy approach for eradicating and eliminating this important problem facing the humanity. On the other hand, another influential group of economists which emerged in Britain in the eighteenth century not only advocates but forcefully implement their policy of free market economy by legalizing every types of drugs. Adam Smith, David Ricardo and other liberal writers were considered as the founder of this school of thought. These scholars propagated the philosophy of individualism and rational self interest based upon the doctrine of Laissez-faire, which translates as “leave us alone”. According to this philosophy even a **Parrot** can become an economist if he learns the law of demand and supply. In other words this doctrine emphasized that government intervention in any economic matters should be left to the interchange of supply and demand in the marketplace. In the philosophy of free-market economy, neither the consumers nor the producers are responsible for the production, utilization, and division and pricing. Many governments advocated this philosophy in the middle of nineteenth century up to the end of the nineteenth century. The economy of the United States as well as many Western European countries with draw from full laissez-faire at the closing decade of the nineteenth century. These countries then implemented a new economic system called “Welfare State” specifically after the decades following

WWII. The philosophy of free market ideologies came again in 1980 due to the strong influence and support of US president Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. This philosophy received further momentum and legitimization due to the collapse of communism in former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1989/90. In term of addictive substances proponent of this philosophy opined that addictive substances should be made legal for adults but it should be also made pure for potency and efficiency. Proponents of this approach opined that the current war on drugs has been unsuccessful and the associated costs-including enlarged police forces, the constructions of more prisons, an overburdened court system and untold human cost have increased markedly. In other words the overall impact of addictive substance to users, to other people , and to the ravaged inner cities in which the trade takes place would be lower if government regulation were relaxed and the resources currently devoted to supply restrictions were instead put into treatment and counseling. To paraphrase the opinion of free markets ideologists, the legalization of every type of addictive substance will be a far more superior policy approach than the prohibition. Legalization of addictive substance might increase the number of addictive users, but this policy approach will also reduce the damaging impact on society through a decrease in robbery, theft, prostitution as well as on a number of other channels. Free market ideologist argued the negative externality created by prohibiting addictive substance to the entire society is much greater than its positive impact.

After having analyzed the different and contrasting views of economists regarding addictive substance, it is hard to draw a conclusion as to whether legalization is advantageous or prohibition is advantageous.

4. Addictive substances in Islam:

Islam considers human being as the best among all creatures on the basis of their wisdom, intellect and knowledge. On the other hand contemporary western thinker's and scientists regards humans as having no special status apart from the rest of other creatures. Among them, prominent were Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Jean-Paul Satre, B.F. Skinner and Konrad Lorenz. All of them opined that "existence and human life are both unintentional and that humanity is the probable product of the development of evolution. They also stressed that matter is the essential element of the universe; and therefore human mind-sets and way of behaving are the consequences of human biological activities." One common thing among all these thinker's and scientists is the belief of atheism and hence the exclusion of religion from all spheres and activities of life. All these Western thinkers and scientist regarded humans as mortal, while ignoring the unobservable part of human soul. In fact dreams always convinced sensible human being that there was more to human that met the bodily eye. Dream is a type of situation where any human being could experience anything unimaginable beyond his control.

In Quran (Muslim Holiest Book) dreams is mentioned in the following words.

"It is God that takes the souls at death, and those that die not during their sleep. He keeps that (soul) for which He hath ordained death and dismisseth the rest till an appointed term. Verily in this are signs for those who reflect." [Quran 39:42]

In dreams people are given an indication of the future events and happenings which are either blessings or curses. In the philosophy of Islam death of the bodily life is not the end of human existence. It is believed that bodily life in this world is unconscious to the divine and spiritual world, while the time of death is considered

as the reawakening to the divine and spiritual world. As a proof and justification for the above argument Islamic philosophers give the example of nightly sleep. Sleep on one hand perform the function of rest to our human physical life, but on the other hand gave an example and taste of death. In Islamic philosophy Day of Resurrection/Judgment of human deeds and action is nothing more than the reawakening from sleep. In computer similarity human Soul/Mind is assumed as software while human body as hardware. Therefore for either rewarding or punishing human deeds or actions, this Software/Soul/Mind is then transformed to some other means on the Day of Resurrection/ Day of Result Declaration of human deeds.

In Quran Soul/Spirit is mentioned in the following words,

“They put you questions about Ar-Ruh (*the Spirit*). Tell them: "The Spirit is at my Lord's command and I am not given any knowledge of it but a little."

[Quran 17:85]

“Soon shall We show them Our signs in the universe and in their own souls, until it becomes clear to them that this Qur'an is indeed the truth. Is it not enough that your Lord is a witness over everything”? [Quran 41;53]

Soul is something which cannot be quantified nor distributed nor approximated. No one knows the exact place of soul in human body. Only soul has the capacity of knowing the true purpose of life on this earth. The soul is a supernatural thing which cannot be explained through any material arguments and reasoning. Quran express this reality in the following words:

“No one knows the forces of your Lord except Himself, and this (*Qur'an*) is nothing but a reminder to mankind. [Quran 74:31]

Since time immemorial, human managed successfully apparently stubborn problems, but no one until today were able to know the true nature of soul. Human soul is a mystery, which will remain forever. Man lives until a certain day and then dies. Some dies in their young and early ages, while other go through all phases of life and then dies in their latter years. In other words, every human being is destined to die. In Islamic philosophy this worldly life is a test of human behavioral freedom until death. It is a test of God/Allah to evaluate who is better in his deeds and action in order to determine the final destiny which is either Heaven or Hell. In Islamic philosophy every sensible human behavioral repertoire entails with the habits of Lion, Pigs, Cattle, Devil and Angels. In other words God/Allah tests human behavior with the attitude of lion, Pigs, cattle, devil and angel. Like lion, human do have the behavioral tendencies to dominate, to compete, to be aggressive, to be proud. Like Pigs humans sometime behave in dirtiest, greedy and become indiscriminate in their sexual behavior. Like cattle, human do have the behavioral tendencies to eating, drinking ...and increasing their offspring.

Similarly the behavioral tendencies of devils were to create and further violence and corruption among the humanity.

activities of Angels were to seek the obedience and beauty of God. According to the philosophy of Islam, humans are successful only if they behave like Angels, while the attitudes and behavior of Lions, Cattles and Devils are considered as a

punishable act (sin). A question arises if humans do have the behavioral tendencies of Lions, Cattles, Devils and Angels, then why they get success and salvation by behaving only like angels and not like lion, cattle and devils? According to the philosophy of Islam, human being is the noblest, perfect and best among all creatures. Human being is endowed with the wisdom and intellect to differentiate between sin and virtue. In other words this world is a place for test and this test requires some people to be fortunate and some to be unfortunate. Some are created with wealth and power, while some are created as weak and poor. The fortunate and unfortunate are both tested for tolerance and thankfulness to God (Allah) and how they use this freedom for him and society. In short, every human being is tested according to their own circumstance. On the Day of Judgment Allah/God will ask how you utilize your freedom. Did you behaved like Lion, Cattle, Devils or Angels? Quran (Muslim Holiest Book) mention this reality in the following words,

“Glorious is the One in whose hand is the Kingdom (of the whole universe), and He is powerful over everything, the One who created death and life, so that He may test you as to which of you is better in his deeds. And He is the All-Mighty, the Most-Forgiving”. [Quran 67:3]

Among the testing materials addictive substance is one of them, in which prominent and widely used are alcoholic drinks, heroin and cocaine. Like Christian, Jews also regards alcoholic drinks as Sacred and Holly. Alcoholic drinks serve as an essential part in religious festivals among the Jews. In Judaism it is believed that alcoholic drinks gladden the heart of men, therefore alcoholic

substance is treated as one of the essential component in festival meal. In the Jewish religious festivals as well as on the eve of Sabbath, holiness and sacredness of the day is mentioned before the use of alcoholic substances. To make the festival holy in Judaism, special blessings for wine are recited before the meal on the eve of Sabbath or on a holiday. The importance of wine among the Jews as an essential food item can be verified and confirmed from the fact that in the case of fire on the day of Sabbath, the presence of three necessities must be made obligatory, which includes a basket of loaves, a cake made from preserved figs and a jar of wine. (EBi. C. 15690) See also P.II, pp. 438, 440

;Quran mention this reality in the following words

“O you who believe; Intoxicants (All kinds of Alcoholic drinks), and gambling, and Al-Ansab() and Az-Alam (Arrow for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaitan’s (Devil) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful”. [Quran 5:90]

Ground reality exhibits that drug addicts are always troublemakers among the society. Recent data revealed that around 25 to 85 percent of all wrongdoers are drunkards (JE. I.P. 333). It is universally verified and confirmed that there are linear association between excessive drinking and breaking and infringement of the ethical law among the society. Alcoholic substances belong to a group of toxic chemicals, whose nutritional value is of no utility in practical dietetics. In fact it is one of the misleading arguments that use of alcoholic substance has a motivating and stimulating impact. Alcoholic drinks when used in medium quantity have a

tranquilizing impact, while its use in excess has a fatal and venomous impact. That's why alcoholic substances as a drink and cocktail are unsafe for bodily processes. Users of addictive substances are not only financially corrupt, but also become one of the greatest sources of creating negative externality among the general public. (Dastur, op. cit., PP. 108-109). In summary Quran express this reality in the following sentence.

“Satan only seeks to breed enmity and spite among you by means of wine and gambling and would keep you from the remembrance of Allah/God and from prayer; will you not then desist”? [Quran 5:91]

From the above discussion it is evident that only Islam became successful in tackling this pressing issue of addictive substances. In the philosophy of Islam, on one side production as well as consumption of addictive substances is strictly prohibited, while on the other side through moral education these substances are discourage and opposed.

5. Conclusion:

According to the 2005 World Health Organization report, without social harm caused to society alcohol ranks fourth among 20 leading risk factors for death and disability globally, while the finding of more recent scientific study of “Lancet”, disclosed that alcohol is more harmful than heroin or crack, when the overall damages to the individual and society are incorporated.

About the policy prescription provided by economists, George Bernard Shaw famously said that, “If all economists were laid end to end, they would not

reach a conclusion”. Besides numerous examples the economic case towards addictive substances is one of them where it is very hard to take a decision whether drug prohibition or drug legalization will be a better policy approach. On one hand economist emphasis that anything which is profitable should be produced without any intervention in the market. While on the other hand economists accepts that market fails to allocate the resources efficiently in case of de-merits goods like intoxicants materials.

Similarly in Christianity drinking wine is a form of worship, which is regularly held at the rite of Holy Communion. The rite of Holy Communion also known as the ritual of Passover or Eucharist or Sacred Meal ranks amongst the most important rituals of Christianity. Bible (Christian’s Holly book) is divided into two major parts, The Old Testament and the New Testament. The New Testament was written mostly by Paul, a Jew who converted to Christianity and later on became the leading explainer of the Christian faith. Moreover the Four Gospels in Bible which describe the life and philosophy of Jesus Christ, there are many other Gospels which are available until today. These Books/Gospels which could have become part of the Bible, and indeed were and are accepted by some Christians, are rejected by the majority of the elders of the Church. These controversial Gospels are known as Apocrypha, a Greek word which means concealed but which is now wrongly understood as meaning “unauthentic, false”. The publicly and legitimately accepted books are called “Canonical”, which is regarded as the true word of God. Observing the ground realities about the harmful effect of inebriating materials and reading the verses in Holly Bible about drug use one start suspecting whether these verses also represents the true word of God or Apocrypha?

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful”. (Al-Quran 2:23)

In sharp contrast to conventional economics and Christianity, Islam regards addictive substances as the mother of all evils and ills. Islamic countries where Islamic Law (Sharia) is implemented, on one side production and consumption of addictive substances are strictly prohibited, while on the other side they also discourage the uses of these addictive substances. It is a universal fact that hatred and enmity has linear association with intoxicants and gambling. No one can deny the fact that the use of inebriating materials disrupts the whole social setup. Addictive substance which is neither a necessity nor a comfort good continues to cost countless damage and destruction to humanity around the globe. The damage and destruction of addictive substance is evident from the annual expenditures on alcohol, which are about \$30 billion, while the annual estimates for illegal drugs are approximately \$20 to \$ 50 billion.

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